

# Finding a Job **IS** a Job

A successful job search requires time and effort. Most people work 40 hours a week. So if you're unemployed, you should plan on devoting that much time to a job search. But first, you need to get organized, and plan how to look for work strategically. Often the hardest thing is just getting started, but don't delay or let anything stop you from working on your job search plan.

Certain things are essential for an effective job search. Ideally, you've done a thorough assessment of yourself. You know your values, skills and interests. Before you actually apply for any jobs, begin your job search by gathering and organizing all the related information you can, to promote your qualifications and satisfy the needs of a prospective employer.

## *First, get organized*

If you've never been an organized person, now is the time to develop this skill. Establish measurable goals and schedule your days. Plan, then do job-search activities to meet those goals.

For example, you could set Monday morning, eight to noon, for identifying your skills. Then the afternoon could be spent preparing a resume. Tuesday you could spend two hours in a library or on the Internet to look up 10 potential employers to contact. Then you might

*This article is the first in a series on finding a job. We thought it would be helpful, in this economic downturn, to people who may have lost their job, or just want to be prepared to find another one, in case. Subsequent articles will deal with job search topics.*

## *Getting organized, having clear occupational objectives, and learning about the hidden job market are crucial to your job search.*

plan to spend the rest of the day and Wednesday actually making contacts. At the end of each day review how you did, and revise your plans as needed. But keep up the pace—challenge yourself.

### *Have clear occupational objectives*

No job seeker is really looking for “anything.” Use what you learned from your self-assessment (<http://jobs.utah.gov/opencms/wi/pubs/adultcareerguide/knowthyself.pdf>) to define your employment goals.

Next, look at the list of your skills you’ve identified (<http://jobs.utah.gov/opencms/wi/pubs/adultcareerguide/identifyyourskills.pdf>) and narrow it down to those pertaining to the particular types of jobs you are seeking.

Prepare a personal data sheet with all your employment-related information. This will make employment applications easier to complete.

Write one or more basic resumes that you can adapt and customize in order to advertise your skills to each potential employer.

### *The hidden job market and networking*

The vast majority (80 percent or more) of job openings are not advertised!

Most employers do not need to advertise; they have enough applicants without it, through “word of mouth,” or networking. Employers prefer to hire on a referral from someone they trust. This is what makes networking so important.

Direct employer contact is part of your campaign to sell your qualifications. Make a list of potential employers. As your job search progresses, you will continually change this list. One excellent resource is FirmFind (<http://jobs.utah.gov/firmfind/pgMain.asp>), a searchable list of all the companies in Utah.

You can search it by area or occupation to find names, addresses and phone numbers who employ the occupation you are seeking. Another way is using your local public library. You can also use Chamber of Commerce listings, Internet search engines, industry guides, newspapers and the phone book.

Now, plan a strategy to approach each potential employer. Develop a short “sound bite” by describing aloud the job you seek, the skills you offer, and why you are the best candidate. It is also a good idea to look at your resume as if you were that particular employer, and make any

adjustments to emphasize the skills, experience or traits that employer would want.

When contacting an employer directly, try to talk to the person who would supervise you in your desired job, even if there are not jobs currently open. Making a good impression at this point may be the reason they call you later when something opens up.

Planning, persistence and follow-up are the keys to a successful job search. ①

